The Principles of Ahl us-Sunnah in Deriving Aqidah

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Sources for the Aqeedah (1)

The aqeedah has two fundamental sources, they are:

1. The Book of Allah -the Most high (the noble Quraan)

2. What is authentic from Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) . Since the Messenger (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) does not speak from desires,rather his words are Revelation sent down.

And the Ijmaa (concensus) of the Salafus-Saalih (Pious Predecessors): A source based upon the Book and Sunnah (2)

As regards the uncorrupted fitrah (natural state) and the sound and correct aql(intellect) then they will agree with and conform to the Book and the Sunnah and will be able to arrive at the general principles of aqeedah, but not its details.So the sound and correct aql and fitrah affirm Allahs existence and that He is Most great and that it is essential to obey and to worship Him; and that He has the Attributes of Greatness and Majesty. Likewise, the sound aql and the uncorrupted fitrah realise the necessity of there being Prophets and the sending of Messengers;and that there has to be Resurrection and requital of actions; etc-in general, but without the specifics and details.

However, as for other matters and the rest of the matters of the Ghayb (Unseen) ,then their is no way to find them out in detail, except by way of the Book and the Sunnah (the revelation) otherwise it would not be from the Unseen.

And contradiction between a clear text of the Book and the Sunnah and sound and correct 'aql cannot be imagined and is infact an impossibilty. So if there appears to be a contradiction between the two then the Revelation is given precedence and is decisive (3) since it comes from the one who is infallible (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) , whereas the aql (intellect) of a person is not infallible. Indeed,the aql is the deficient perception of humans, and it is open to misconception, error, forgetfulness, desires, ignorance and inability--thus it is certainly deficient.

Its Principles and Methodology

1. The source for aqeedah is the Book of Allah ,the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) and the Ijmaa (concensus) of the Salaf(pious predecessors).

2. Everything that we have with us authentically reported from Allaahs Messenger

(sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) ,then we have to accept it - whether it has been related in mutaawatir or ahaad form.(5)

3. That which we refer back in order to understand the Book and the Sunnah are those texts which explain others;and the understanding of the Salafus-Saalih (the pious Predecessors(6) and those scholars who followed their minhaj (methodology) and then what is correct from the language point of view. However,we do not reject something established due to a language meaning.

4. All the fundamental principles of the Deen were explained by the Prophet (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) .That which which was not considered part of the deen at that time can not be considered part of the Deen later.

5. Submission to Allah and His Messenger (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) both inwardly and outwardly.So we do not oppose anything from the Book,nor from the authentic Sunnah with qiyaas(analogy), personal views, kashf(intuition), nor the saying of any Shaykh or Imaam,etc.

6. Correct and sound 'aql (reasoning or intellect) agrees with authentic naql(text)-thes e two agree with each other - and what is qat'ee (definite) fom either of them can not contradict the other.If there is an apparent contradiction, then the text is given precedence.

7. It is imperative and obligatory to adhere to the textual and Sharee'ah wordings in matters of aqeedah and to avoid innovated terms and wordings. As regards wordings which contain more than one meaning and may be correct or incorrect,then the meaning should be ascertained; so if the meaning is correct then it is affirmed with a Sharee'ah wording. However,if the meaning is incorrect,then it is rejected.

8. Infalliblity(ie being masoom) is established for Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) .The Ummah as a whole is also masoom (infallible) and protected fro uniting upon error and misguidance.However,as for the individuals of this Ummah,then they are not masoom(ie they err and make mistakes). So whenever there is a difference amongst the scholars,then we refer it back to the Book and the Sunnah along with making an excuse for the one who has erred and is mistaken; since he is from mujtahidoon (those Scholars who are qualified to extract rulings from the Book and the Sunnah) of this Ummah.

9. In this Ummah there are some who are muhaddath (addressed) with ilhaam (inspiration (i.e. inspired without receiving revelation, since that has ended with the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam)). Good dreams are true and are a part of Prophethood.Likewise, truthful intuition is a true fact and is considered as being one of the karaamat (miraculous occurences) with the condition that it conforms to and agrees with the Revelation. However,such dreams and intuitions are neither a source for deriving matters of aqeedah nor Sharee'ah.

10. Argumentation about the Deen is something censured, whilst debating in a good manner is something prescribed. However,there are certain matters which it is not permissible to debate and argue about. It is obligatory to withhold from speaking about

those matters which one has no knowledge of and to refer knowledge of it back to Allah.

11. It is essential and obligatory to adhere to the same methodology of the Revelation when refuting. So an innovation is not refuted with another innovations, negligence and falling short is not refuted with extremity, nor is extremity refuted with negligence.

12. Every newly invented matter in the Deen is a bidah (innovation).Every bidah is going astray and misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.

Footnotes:

(1) From Mubaahith fee Aqeedah Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah(p.28)

(2) Refer to Al-Itisaam (2/252) of ash-Shatibee.

(3) Refer to Sharhul-Aqeedat-Tahaawiyah (pp.140-141) of Ibn Abil-'Izz al-Hanafee.And refer also to Dar'Taarudil-Aqlmaan-Naql(1/88-280)of Ibn taymiyyah and indeed ,refer to the whole book as it is very beneficial in this matter.

(4) Mujmal Usool Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah fil -Aqeedah (pp.7-9)

(5) Shaykh Mahmood at-Tahhaan said in tayseer Mustahlil-Hadeeth (pp.20-21) about the definition of mutaawatir:

Technically: "That which is related by such a larg number of people,that it is impossible that they have invented a lie.Its conditions: i) That it be narrated by a large number of people, Scholars differ about the actual number required, ii) that this number found in every level of the chain, iii) that it is impossible that they could have gathered together upon a lie"

Refer to Nuzhatun-Nadhr fee Tawdeehi Nukhbatil-Fikr(p.57) of al-Haafidh Ibn Hajjar and Tadreebur-Raawee(2/177) of as-Suyotee.

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar says in Nuzhatun-NaNadhr(p.71) about the definition of the aahad hadeeth:"It is that which does not fulfil the conditions of the mutaawatir."

And the aahaad narrations constitute the majority of narrations, whether in the collections of al-Bukhareee and Muslim, or in the collections of other than them.

(6) From the clearest sign and greatest testimony of a persons truly following the path of the Salafus-Saalih is clinging firmly to their sayings and their judgements with regards to aqeedah,which have been preserved in the earliest books of aqeedah and manjah and from these twelve principles have been derived.So from the earlies of these books are:

1) Kitaabul-Eemaan by the Imaam and mujtahid,Abu 'Ubayd al-Qaasim ibn Salaam(d.224H)
2) Kitaabul-Eemaan by the Imaam Ib Abee Shaybah(d.235H)
3) Usoolus -Sunnah and Ar-Radd 'alal Jahmiyyah waz-Zanaadaqah by the Imaam of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jammah Ahmad bin Hanbal(d.241H)
4) Khalq Afaalul-Ibaad ,Kitaabul-Eeemaan and Kitabut-Tawheed (the last two being part of al-Jamius-Saheeh) by Imaam al-Bukharee(d.256H).
5) As-Sunnah by the student of Imaam Ahmad, Abu Bakr al-Athram(d.273H)
6) Kitaabus-Sunnah (being part of the sunan) by the faqeeh and Imaam Ibn Abu Dawood as -Sijistaanee (d.275H)
7) Al-Ikhtilaaf fee Ladfh war-Radd 'alal-Jahmiyyah by imaam Ibn Qutaybah(d.276H)
8) Ar-Radd 'alal Jayhmiyyah by Imaam ad-Daarimee(d.280H)
9) As-Sunnah by the qaadee and haafidh,Ibn Abee 'Aasim(d.287H)
10) As-Sunnah by the haafidh, Abdullah ibn Imaam Ahmad(d.290H)
11) As-Sunnah by the qaadee and muhaaddith AbuBakr al-Maroozee (d.292H)

12) As-Sunnah by the student of Imaam Ahmad al-Marwaazee(d.292H)
13) Sareehus-Sunnah by the mujtahid, mufassir and Imaam Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree(d.310H)
14) Kitaabut-Tawheed wa Ithbaat Sifaatur-Rabb by the faqeeh and Imaam, Ibn Khuzaymah(d.311H)
15) Aqeedatut-Tahaawiyyah by the Imaam Abu Jafar at-Tahaawee (d.321H)
16) Al-Maqaalatul-Islamiyeen, Ar-Risaalah ilaa Ahlth-Thaghr and Al-Ibaanah 'an Usoolid-Diyaanah by Imaam Abdul-Hasan al-Asharee(d.324H)
17) Aslus-Sunnah by the haafidh and Imaam ,Abu Haatim ar-Raazee(d.327H)
18) Sharhus-Sunnah by the Imaam of Ahlus-sunnah wal-Jammah in his time Imaam al-Barbaaharee (d.329H)
(19) Kitaab us-Sunnah by the qaadee,Abu Ahmad al-Asaal(d.349H)
(20) Ash-Shareeah by the faqeeh and Imaam, Abu Bakr al-Aajuree(d.360H)
(21) Itiqaad Aimmatul-Hadeeth by the faqeeh and Imaam ,Abu Bakr al-Ismaeelee(d.371H)
(22) Kitaabus-Sifaat and Kitaabun-Nuzool by the haafidh,the Imaam ad-Daaraqutnee(d.385H)
(23) Al-Ibaanah 'an Sharee'atil Firqatin -Naajiyah and Sharhul-Ibaanah 'an Usoolis-Sunnah wad-Diyaanah by the haafidh,the faqeeh,Imaam Battah al-Akbaree(d.387H)
(24) Kitaabut-Tawheed and ar-Radd'alal-Jahmiyyah both by the haafidh and Imaam ,Ibn Mandah(d.395H)
(25) Al-Usool Itiqaad Ahlus-Sunnah Wal Jamaah by the haafidh and faqeeh ,Imaam al-Laalilkaee(d.395H)
(26) Al-Wusool ilaa Maarifatil-Istiwaa by Imaam Abu 'Amr at-Talamankee al-Andalusee(d.429H)
(27) Al-Itiqaad by Abu Nuaym al-Ashbaanee(d.430H)
(28) Rissaalah fee Ithbaatil-Istiwaa by Imaam Abu Muhammad al-Juwaynee(d.438H)
(29) Aqeedatus-Salaf Ashaabul-hadeeth by the haafidh and Imaam ,Abu Uthmaan as-Saboonee(d.449H)
(30) Al-I'tqaad alaa Madhabis-Salaf Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah by Imaam al-Bayhaaqee(d.457H)

(31) Dhammul-Kalaam by the haafidh and faqeeh, Shaykh ul-Islaam Abu Ismaeel al-Harawee(d.481H)